Reviewer’s report

Title: Interactive Content for the iPod - its Production, Design and Potential Use: Technical Advances

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Reviewer: Rachel Ellaway

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I have had problems getting a legible PDF of this article and on the last copy I received the formatting and punctuation are still garbled - it is hard to identify what is a technical problem and what is an author omission. Certainly the language needs checking for spelling, punctuation (missing periods) and syntactic errors (eg "for the a large" on p8).

I would disagree that "A podcast is essentially a passive learning experience focused on an audio facility alone" - I am a subscriber to an anatomy podcast that cross references downloadable images and a foreign language one that has online vocabulary sheets - the subsequent description of the use of hypertext and images as part of podcasting also belies this assertion.

Two and a half pages are given over to a stepwise description of the preparation of HTML for the iPod but then it glosses over the kinds of skills required for the rest of the task, the steps required for recording and editing audio, what is required for packaging and delivering the activity, as well as issues such as copyright and consent. In this respect the 'how to' section jars against the subsequent evaluation section of the paper.

Note that images and videos are only supported on the latest generation full iPods (not earlier and not iPod Nano or Shuffle) - this should be clarified. The paper clearly states this focuses on iPods - a description of how this differs for other players mentioned (including PCs) would be appropriate.

The evaluation conducted is a basic what do you like/dislike which has only limited validity and representativeness. The data, particularly given the low n value would not seem to represent a large enough sample to be meaningful and as such the findings presented are somewhat limited in applicability. I would suggest that for a study to be published the empirical component should be significantly more robust. In particular, issues such as student preferences not equating to efficacy but rather to current socio-cultural norms should be considered.

This paper is rather unbalanced and as such needs some work to even out the focus and level of detail - perhaps placing the ‘how-to’ as a linked document, inserting a full set of instructions (rather than just the HTML component) and instead focusing on more fundamental issues such as methodology and a greater attention to analysis and conclusions in the main text.